

The Commissioner's REPORT

New Jersey
Transportation
Highlights

Governor
James E. McGreevey

January 2003

Acting Commissioner
Jack Lettiere

Message from former Commissioner Jamie Fox

As you may know, as of January 1 I left my duties as Transportation Commissioner to serve as Chief of Staff for Governor McGreevey. During my tenure at NJDOT, I believe that the Department was able to advance Governor McGreevey's vision of a safer, more efficient transportation system that adds to the high quality of life in this State. The Department can be proud of the job it has done and will continue to do.

At NJDOT, I had the pleasure of working with some of the most enthusiastic and smartest people in government. I was fortunate enough to have a Deputy Commissioner, Jack Lettiere, whose knowledge and passion for transportation policy impressed me on a daily basis, and I can think of no better man than Jack to take my place at NJDOT. Governor McGreevey has made a wise decision to name Jack the next Transportation Commissioner.

Jack has been with the Department for 28 years and understands New Jersey's transportation networks better than anyone I know. As Assistant Commissioner for Capital Investment, Jack successfully managed the Department's \$2.6 billion Capital Program since 1993. Jack's funding innovations have been vital for getting New Jersey many of the transportation improvements it needs and deserves.

As a leader in the Department, Jack has always insisted on results. While I was at NJDOT, Jack stressed to me the importance of trying every option available when battling congestion and searching for funds to rehabilitate our infrastructure. Jack will

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NJDOT Acting Commissioner Jack Lettiere (center) makes a point to panel moderator by Steve Adubato (left) and NJ TRANSIT's Executive Director George Warrington (right).

First transportation conference: Governor sets up Blue Ribbon Commission

The First Annual Governor's Transportation Conference was held on January 7 at the New Brunswick Hyatt. The event, sponsored by the New Jersey Alliance for Action, brought together lawmakers and experts from across the state to discuss New Jersey's transportation needs and outline strategy for the coming year.

At the conference, Governor McGreevey signed an executive order creating a Blue Ribbon Transportation Commission to study and develop recommendations on the pressing transportation issues confronting New Jersey as the renewal of the Trust Fund approaches.

Governor McGreevey delivered the keynote note address to the more than 1,200 attendees, stressing the value of a healthy transportation network to the everyday lives of working families. In his speech, the Governor called on the Department of Transportation to build upon the successes of 2002, including Fix-it-First, Smart Growth, E-ZPass improvements and reform efforts at DMV.

He emphasized the importance of a stable source of transportation funding and the government's responsibility to present a long-term strategy for improvement. Under the Governor's direction, NJDOT has brought back Madeline Rumowicz to undertake the first statewide, ten year Transportation Master Plan since 1979.

"The plan will be our vision for New Jersey and it will be coordinated with the State's plans for growth and economic development," said the Governor. The comprehensive Master Plan will incorporate Smart Growth development, identify a list of specific projects critical for safety and congestion relief, and the map out the consolidation of the State's transportation authorities.

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Stop congestion: Smart Growth

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NJDOT meets a major Smart Growth goal: stop congestion

During his State of the State address, Governor McGreevey outlined a bold and clear vision for the future development of New Jersey: the State will no longer subsidize sprawl development and the State will back its communities in their Smart Growth efforts. Smart Growth is the Governor's plan to end unchecked development.

The Department of Transportation is uniquely positioned to carry out this vision. We know the elements of transportation design that invite sprawl and we know how to avoid them. Eliminating new sprawl will prevent new congestion across the state and will help the Department of Transportation concentrate on eradicating the gridlock that already exists.

One example of the Smart growth strategy at work is the re-design of the Route 206 bypass in Hillsborough and Montgomery Townships. The original plan to build a bypass with three interchanges contradicted Smart Growth policies. It would have encouraged sprawl and more congestion, defeating the purpose of the bypass to alleviate congestion through these communities.

The new design of the Route 206 bypass preserves open

space, concentrates development, and eliminates two of three intersections that would have induced sprawl. The plan is a modification of the original project and is still expected to begin during Summer 2005.

Diverting through traffic away from the existing Route 206 is designed to compliment Hillsborough's plans to develop a town center along the old highway. The addition of the bypass will allow the town to create a business district with pedestrian-friendly crossings and access. Both are important features of Smart Growth that allow a community to channel development into its center safely.

The redesign of the Route 206 bypass is a milestone for Governor McGreevey's Smart Growth initiative. The Governor's plan addresses over-development with initiatives such as the redesign of non-Smart Growth projects to more effectively govern development along our roads. His plan approaches growth through regional planning, and focuses on the redevelopment of our aging infrastructure. Through these initiatives, we will take strong, preemptive steps to avoid sprawl-inducing development.

First transportation conference Continued from front page

The Executive Order calls for the funding of 20,000 new Park and Ride spaces near NJ TRANSIT stations. With the executive order, the Governor has directed NJDOT and other state transportation agencies to implement expedited project completion schedules and to place a priority on projects that relieve congestion and improve highway safety.

The State Transportation Trust Fund is the primary funding source for such projects in New Jersey. The State also receives about half of its funding each year from the Federal Transportation Enhancement Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Both programs are scheduled for renewal.

New Jersey faces a transportation system in which all

modes of transportation are at or above capacity, a system with 2000 deteriorating bridges and a system with some of the most congested roads in the country.

"The new Blue Ribbon Commission will make recommendations for funding and help establish priorities to guide the State as we begin the effort to renew the Transportation Trust Fund," the Governor said.

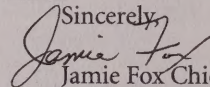
New Jersey has a long tradition of bipartisan support for transportation funding. The Governor said that he would work with all stakeholders, from business and labor to town and taxpayer, democrats and republicans alike as the State moves forward with efforts to create a safe and efficient transportation system for the 21st century.

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fight for the people of New Jersey, and he will cut through the red tape to ensure that the people's needs are met.

I am very glad to have been your transportation Commissioner for the past ten months and know that our transportation network is in highly capable hands.

I look forward to working with you all from the Governor's office.

Sincerely,


Jamie Fox Chief of Staff to Governor McGreevey



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